NFORMATION REPORTS INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

C 42142



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COUNTRY	USSR (Latvian SSR)		REPORT				
SUBJECT	City of Riga	•	DATE DISTR.	3 Ma	y 1956		
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SOURCE EVALUATIONS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

- 1. Source visited the central market (No. 12 on attached city plan) in Riga and found the wholesale hall already closed at 1000 hours. In the meat hall, meat hacked into small slivers was priced 20 to 25 rubles per kilogram. Excepting some small Faeroe Island fish and one salmon selling at 60 rubles per kilogram, there were almost no fish in the fish hall. In the dairy products hall, butter cost 30 rubles per kilogram. Outside the halls, where fruit and vegetables were sold, there were potatoes, cabbage, and carrots for two to two and one-half rubles per kilogram. The Flea Market, which was inside the halls, was doing an active business in old clothes and junk of every description sold at fantastically high prices.
- 2. About 500 meters from the central market, a 24-story building had been erected for the Ministry of State Farms. The exterior of the building was completed, and the interior was to be finished in 1956. Small houses and old warehouses in the immediate vicinity were to be torn down so that the view of the new building, considered a symbol of Soviet strength, would be unobstructed. 25X1
- 3. Since World War II, three bridges over the Daugava River in Riga had been reconstructed. A pontoon bridge (No. 10 on the attached city plan) was completed in 1947. It was taken in during the months when the river was frowen, and crossings were made on the ice. The wooden bridge (No. 9 on the attached city plan), said to have been constructed in 71 days, was finished in 1952. This bridge was considered temporary, as there was a project for a new steel bridge under construction (sic). In 1953, a steel bridge (No. 11 on attached city plan) destroyed in 1945 was rebuilt. The city water and electric power systems had also been restored and several factories rebuilt.
- 4. Opposite the Riga opera, a new hotel of 260 rooms was under construction on the site of the old Rom Hotel, which had burned. The exterior was nearly completed. Behind the hotel, there was a long queue of people waiting to get into a large store, formerly called the Military Cooperative. The merchandise displayed in the windows was of poor quality, and the prices were very high. On Aspasijas bulvaris, flowers and shrubs were growing where several houses and a large case and pastry shop had been destroyed by bombs.

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- 5. A handicraft festival was being held in the two Handicraft Association buildings, built by the German Handicraft Association and called the Grosse und Kleine Gilden. There were large restaurants in the basements, but these were closed. The House of Culture was located in the Kleine Gilde.
- The Stock Exchange building was closed and in dilapidated condition. The two corner buildings, in which the Stock Exchange Bank and the Bank of Commerce were located, were in very bad repair. A building on Ritterstrassee was being used as the town hall, since the old one had been bombed. The Riga radio station, destroyed by the Germans, had formerly been located near Radio iela but was now operating in Zolitude. The new station (No. 14a on attached city plan), which had four towers, was located east of the rail line from the city to the beach on the west side of Riga Bay. The post office had been moved to a site where a hotel formerly stood on Lenina iela.
- 7. The Riga opera was in good condition, excepting the entrance hall and smoking area, which were dilapidated. The foyer was gray and depressing, and the entire building was dirty. The performances, however, were excellent. The patrons were fairly well dressed, although the material of both men's and women's clothing was of poor quality.
- 8. In a restaurant, the Foxtrotdiele, which isource visited late in the evening, there were only about 24 patrons, including a few civilians and several Soviet officers with women. A four-piece orchestra was playing, but only three or four couples danced. The patrons seemed to have plenty of money and to be enjoying themselves. In Source later visited the O.U.K. Restaurant, which was also poorly patronized. The waiters were dressed untidily and did not know how to serve.
- 9. The boulevard on which stood the Freedom Monument, erected prior to the Soviet occupation, had been renamed Lenina bulvaris, and a statue of Lenin had been placed at the end opposite the Freedom Monument. Driving out Lenina iela toward Meza parks, insourcet observed that two former hotels had been closed and that there were very few stores. Those which he saw were bakeries and small general stores (kolonials) almost devoid of merchandise. The Brothers' Cemetery (Bralu kapi) and the Raines Cemetery (Raina kapi) located on the way to Meza parks were maintained in beautiful condition, excepting the Baltic part of the latter cemetery, which was overgrown with weeds. Many of the fences had also collapsed.
- 10. On the edge of the cemetery was a labor camp which had been located there since before the Soviet occupation. It was surrounded by a high fence with barbed wire on the top and high towers equipped with searchlights. Ocutaide the main gate, about ten women waited with small bundles for inmates of the camp.
- 11. In Meza parks, there was a newly asphalted road along which stood well-kept villas of influential persons. Along the Kis ezers were kiosks built in the old Russian style, where refreshments were sold in the summer. Further on, there was an open-air stage with grandstands for 20,000 persons and a crescent-shaped amphitheater seating 40,000. The auxiliary reception rooms, restaurants, and baths were to be completed in the spring of 1956.
- 12. The suburb of Maskavas on the road to Ogre (N 56-49, E 24-37), which had been the home of 120,000 to 150,000 Jews before the German occupation decimated their number, was once more a Jewish settlement.

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Legend to Attached City Plan of Riga

- 1. Blinking light and radio tower.
- 2. Mole constructed in the former winter harbor, which was being used as a naval yard. A mother ship and four MTBs were observed in the harbor, and, on one quay, there were 50 to 60 laid-up speedboats.
- 3. Three newly constructed barracks and two store structures estimated to be 50 m x 20 m in size.
- 4. New airfield.
- 5. Location of the old airfield.
- Site of a refrigeration warehouse which was completely destroyed. A large grain elevator next to it was also destroyed.
- 7. Electric works, partially destroyed but in operation.
- 8. Import harbor, which formerly had four large warehouses surrounded by a steel fence. The warehouses were blown up by the Germans when they withdrew from Riga.
- 9. Temporary wooden bridge.
- 10. Pontoon bridge.
- 11. Steel bridge rebuilt in 1953.
- 12. Central market halls built in 1927. There were four buildings: A dry goods hall, meat hall, fish hall, and dairy products hall.
- 13. New building of the Ministry of State Farms.
- 14. Site of the Riga radio station destroyed in World War II.
- 14a. New radio station.
- 15. Open air stage with grandstands and amphitheater.
- 16. Quay at which 13 buildings shown on the city plan of Riga had been destroyed. There was one warehouse about 20 m x 60 m in area.

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